

TOTAL TRUTH #19
Recovering A Comprehensive Christianity

“What Is The Purpose of Man?”

I. Introduction

In tonight’s teaching I want to provide an answer to one of the key questions that every worldview must answer...“What Is The Purpose of Man?”

“Purpose”

The reason for which something is done or created; the reason for which something exists.

In the worldview of Atheism or Darwinism, there is no creational purpose because there is no ‘Creation’; everything is just randomly evolving.

But in the Biblical Worldview, the primary presupposition is that there is a God:

Corollaries of Purpose

God is a God of purpose

Everything God creates has a purpose

Sometimes, purpose is not known

Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable

If you want to know the purpose of a thing, don’t ask the thing

If you want to know the purpose of mankind—don’t ask mankind!
Men will give you many answers; but if we really want to know we must ask God.

Tonight, I want to take a look at two statements in the Bible where God clearly tells us His purpose for man; one in the Old Testament and one in the New.

2 Great Statements of Purpose

The 1st place we find our purpose is in Genesis 1 in what we know as the ‘Dominion Mandate’, or the ‘Cultural Mandate’. The 2nd place we find our

purpose are Jesus' words after the resurrection, known as 'The Great Commission'.

And although spoken 4,000 years apart, these 2 essentially say the same thing!
Which is...Hold on...

Theme

God's primary purpose for man has never been to take us to heaven! Man was created to glorify God on earth by subduing all things to the Lordship of Christ.

I. God's Purpose For Man

A. The Dominion Mandate

Nancy Pearcey

A key passage for constructing a Christian worldview is the Creation account in Genesis 1, where we begin to learn God's original purpose in creating the human race.

1. We find this reference in...

Genesis 1:26, 28

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and *let them have dominion...over all the earth...*" Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...*"

2. Notice: *God did not originally make man for heaven; He made him for the earth!* If God's primary purpose for man is to have us with Him in heaven, why didn't He just create us in heaven?

Psalm 115:16

The heavens are the Lord's but the earth He has given to the children of men.

3. God created the earth for man and man for the earth!

a. The Bible is not about us going up to be with God; it's about God coming down to be with us!

b. He comes down to create the earth; He comes down to make man out of dust; He comes down to walk with man in the Garden.

c. He comes down after the Fall to judge the man, the woman, and the serpent.

d. He comes down to call Abraham; He comes down to deliver Israel from Egypt

e. He commands Moses to build a tabernacle where He can come down to meet with Israel.

f. He becomes flesh so that He can come down and dwell among us.

g. He commands us to pray God's will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven.

h. In His final prayer before the Cross, He doesn't pray for the Father to 'rapture' us out of this world...

John 17:15,18

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

4. Heaven is not our final home; heaven is a holding pen; at the end of the Book, the Bible tells us that *heaven comes to earth!*

Revelation 3:12

He who overcomes...I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.

Revelation 21:2-3

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people."

5. Modern American Christianity has failed to focus on the fact that our final destiny is not getting earth to heaven but seeing God's kingdom come to earth as it is in heaven!

a. God didn't save us to 'rapture' us out of this world!

J. Richard Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth"

The gospel doesn't prepare us to escape from the world. Rather it prepares us rightly to live in this world, both the present world, and the eternal earthly world when God and the New Jerusalem come down to live with redeemed man.

Andrew Sandlin

Our destiny is not a home in heaven. Revelation 21 teaches that in the eternal state, the saints don't go up to heaven. Rather, the New Jerusalem comes down to a fully redeemed earth. God descends to dwell with men. Our destiny is this earth.

Andrew Sandlin

Man was made for earth, and God is restoring and expanding Eden. We are not called to escape the earth, but to exercise stewardship in it. We ought to rejoice in this.

6. Beloved, God has heaven under control; His purpose for man, from creation forward, has to do with the earth.

Kenneth L. Gentry, "The Greatness of the Great Commission"

"Only man is created 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1:26), a 'little lower than the angels' (Psalm 8:5). One vital function of this image is that of man's exercising *dominion over the earth and under God.*"

a. God's purpose for man was dominion OVER THE EARTH but UNDER GOD; this includes all of creation.

7. This is an important point! God grants us an additional insight man's purpose in Genesis 2...

Genesis 2:15 NASB

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

a. Some Bible scholars point out that the word 'cultivate' comes from the same root word as 'culture'...

Kenneth L. Gentry

Adam was to 'cultivate' the earth, beginning in Eden. This means that Man's distinctive purpose in the world was to develop culture. They were to exercise loving stewardship over the rest of Creation. They were to be God's deputies in cultivating the creation and developing it for God's glory.

b. This is why the 'Dominion Mandate' is sometimes called 'The Cultural Mandate'.

c. Here's a 2 minute video clip by Nancy Pearcey on...

Video

Nancy Pearcey, "Understanding the Cultural Mandate"

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
app=desktop&v=MbJh3Mksi10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=MbJh3Mksi10)**

00:00-2:19

d. God created all things in 5 days and then made man on the 6th day; everything God had made was 'very good'; even 'glorious'; but then He turns it all over to man to 'cultivate' it; to make it even better!

Ben Moore, LambsReign.com, 1/18/20

To make His creation even more glorious, God made creatures who would reflect His creative nature by cultivating the physical realm. The term "culture" can refer to just about any human activity.

e. God's command to cultivate the earth was to include ALL of man's activities!

Dr. Henry Morris, "The Biblical Basis for Modern Science"

The "dominion mandate" includes science, technology, the humanities, commerce, law, civil government, and education; in short, every facet of human culture.

8. Then we come to a major turning point: God's purpose for man was clearly revealed in Genesis 1 and 2 but it was perverted by man's sin in Genesis 3.

Ben Moore, LambsReign.com, 1/18/20

God created mankind to take dominion over the earth for cultivation as image bearers of Himself. The first humans failed at this task by rebelling against God's law.

9. But an amazing thing happened! Instead of stripping man of his dominion assignment, God left it in place!

Kenneth L. Gentry

It is important to remember that the Cultural Mandate was not withdrawn with the entry of sin into the world. But the new factor of sin did necessitate divine intervention supplementing the original Mandate with the new factor of redemption.

a. God's purpose for man was not affected by sin!

Ben Moore, LambsReign.com, 1/18/20

Despite their failure, God never rescinded His commission, in fact, He reinstated it with His Old Testament saints. However, like Adam, they would also fail at the task until the *last Adam* (1 Cor. 15:45) would come to succeed on behalf of the human race.

10. Christ came as the 'Last Adam' and the 'Second Man' (1 Cor. 15); He lived a sinless life, keeping all God's commandments perfectly, which qualified Him to be the "Lamb of God" who would take away the sins of the world.

a. The Gospel of Matthew ends with His resurrection from the dead and His appearance to His disciples in Galilee; it is here, in Matthew 28, that He gives them their marching orders in words we commonly call "The Great Commission".

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

11. We should be able to see the similarity between what God said in Genesis 1 and what Jesus says here in Matthew 28..

Ben Moore

As mankind's Redeemer and one who now possesses ultimate dominion in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), Jesus reinstates the cultural mandate as the mission of his church...

Ben Moore

...only now the multiplication comes in the form of discipleship and baptism in the name of the Triune God, and subduing comes by teaching the commandments of Christ which manifests as a Christian culture.

B. The Dominion Mandate Given to Man in the Old Testament Is Reinstated As The Great Commission to MAN in the New Testament

Ben Moore, LambsReign.com, 1/18/20

Tracking the theme of culture and dominion throughout the biblical narrative strongly indicates that the Great Commission *is* the Cultural Mandate reinstated in Christ. The implication then is that Christians are still tasked with building culture, only now it is to be done in a distinctly Christian way for the sake of Christ's kingdom.

1. God's purpose for man has not changed!

Kenneth Gentry

The "dominion mandate" of Genesis 1:26-28 gives way to the "great commission" of Matthew 28:18-20. The issue is still "subduing the earth" and "taking dominion"...

Kenneth L. Gentry

...in the Old Testament, the expression of that purpose focuses on “dominion” over natural things, but in the New Testament, the focus is the spiritual dimension of “making disciples” or creating a culture of “disciplined ones” under Lordship.

2. Being born again restores man to the possibility of fulfilling the purpose lost to him in the Fall...

David Chilton

One of the basic themes of Scripture is that salvation restores man to his original purpose.

Nancy Pearcey

With the entrance of sin, humans lost their way, and went off the path. But when we accept Christ’s salvation, we are put back on the right path and are restored to our original purpose.

Nancy Pearcey

Redemption is not just about being saved from sin, it is also about being saved to something—to resume the tasks for which we were originally created.

3. I hope we’ve shown the purpose of man, in both the Dominion Mandate in the Old Testament and the Great Commission in the New Testament: To create a Christianized culture for the glory of God.

a. This begins in our hearts; but it includes our homes, our churches, and our nation.

Johan Huizinga, Cultural historian

“If we are to preserve culture we must continue to create it. Building culture is the highest calling for Christians. It is what God originally made mankind to do for his glory.”

4. America's founding fathers followed the traditions of the Puritans in seeking divine guidance for establishing our laws. America flourished under the influence of those who saw the Great Commission as a command to create a Christianized culture. That's been mostly lost in our time. And that's the problem:

Theme

The moral decline in American culture and institutions is an indictment of the church and an evidence of our need to be reminded of the purpose of God for creating us in the first place.

III. Close: Taking A Closer Look At The Great Commission

1. Thousands of Pastors and millions of Christians tell us to stay out of politics and stick to saving souls. But the Great Commission says nothing about saving souls...

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

2. Obviously, making disciples of nations *includes* the saving of souls; but the focus is not on individuals.

Kenneth L. Gentry

The Great Commission is not just individualistic, seeking the salvation of individual lost sinners; it is also holistic, seeking the transformation of nations and the Christianization of culture.

3. This is God's purpose for the Church; to bring all things under His lordship, ON EARTH it is in heaven.

R.J. Rushdoony

Make no mistake: Judgment is coming. But the gospel is not fire insurance. It's not chiefly designed to keep people out of hell. It's designed to restore what was

lost in the Garden. God is re-creating the community for a new Garden—the entire earth. This is the goal of the Gospel.

4. Our problem today is that there are more of God's people looking for the 2nd coming than there are of those who are looking for the Christianization of the planet.

5. Many have given up; many are using the worsening conditions as a proof that the Church will lose and the rapture is near. But let me close with the wise words of the great Charles Spurgeon...

Charles Spurgeon

The Lord may come at any moment. On the other hand, I would not venture to assert that the gospel cannot be universally victorious before His coming because I perceive the prevailing opinion is a pillow for many an idle head and is ruinous for any missionary enterprise.

Charles Spurgeon

It is enough for me that a wide dominion will be given to our Lord at some time or other, and that assuredly His kingdom shall embrace all the nations of mankind. The whole earth shall yet be filled with His glory.

Closing Prayer

Title

